industries. All these are strong pointers towards improvement in indigenous capabilities for technology development. In addition, the specialized departments such as Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) have their strong in-house research infrastructure to carry out research in many different areas to meet specific needs and also in cutting edge areas. These departments also promote scientific research through extramural funding.

(c) There are 822 research institutes and centres under various Central Government Departments and Central Public Undertakings which are working in different areas of science and technology in the country.

(d) Yes, Sir.

**High level scientific research**

†1460. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a lack of resources, autonomy of operation and investment for high level scientific researches in the Indian Research Institutes; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The 9th Plan allocation was Rs. 457 crores and the B.E. the 10th Plan is Rs. 1193.16 crores and the proposed 11th Plan allocation is Rs. 3406 crores. Therefore, it is evident that the Plan Outlay have increased substantially over the years. The institutes make their research plans based on national priorities and frontier areas of Science & Technology at global level.

**R&D in biotechnology**

1461. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are undertaking private research and development in biotechnology in public spirit and investments made for sustainable growth;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the complete details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that over the past three years, institutions engaged in research and development of high yielding crop varieties had been suffering owing to a sharp fall in Government grants; and

(d) if so, the comparative details thereof, year-wise and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology is operating a scheme "Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI)" for promoting Public Private Partnerships in R&D in Biotechnology. The scheme operates in two phases. Under Phase-I, high risk, innovative, early stage, pre-proof of concept research and technology development are supported. Under Phase-II, funding is provided for late development and commercialization of innovative research leads. Proposals have been considered in the areas of health, agriculture and related areas. Eight projects have been sanctioned and Rs. 1174.76 lakhs released by way of loans and grants.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The Government grants for research and development have been increased during last three years. The investment made by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology; and ICAR/DARE, Ministry of Agriculture in this area in the last 3 years is as follows:

Rupees in Crores

| Expenditure incurred by different Government Departments | Annual Plan 2004-05 | Annual Plan 2005-06 | Annual Plan 2006-07 | Annual Plan 2007-08 (Proposed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DBT | 27.00 | 26.97 | 35.2 | 89.17 |
| ICAR/DARE | 185 | 236 | 306 | 310.00 |

The Department of Biotechnology is supporting R&D projects in priority crops, multi-institutional projects on marker development and marker aided selection and also on development of transgenics. The department is also supporting plant molecular biology programmes in the four institutions

representing four regions of the country. The mandate of these programmes relate to major problems of priority crops, development of transgenics, quality improvement and basic research in the area of plant molecular biology. A network programme on use of molecular marker technology in wheat quality breeding and also for the improvement of sorghum, finger and pearl millet has been implemented. International collaborations have also been taken up.

The ICAR continued efforts to enhance farm profitability through crop improvement and mangement. Use of biotechnology and hybrid technology, in particular, has been promoted through specific projects on hybrid technology, development of trasngenics and genomics. Human resource development in biotechnology was undertaken by identifying scientists from ICAR institutes/SAUs for training abroad to provide cutting edge advantages in the field of agriculture. ICAR has continued to participate in international rice genome seuquencing project Phase-II. Besides the above, a network project on "Functional Genomics and Transgenics in Crops" including cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, fruits and cash crops, seeks to strengthen the R&D efforts at a cost of about Rs. 32.85 crores. A network project on molecular breeding has also been sanctioned with an outlay of Rs. 2.41 crores.

**Upliftment of Scheduled Castes**

1462. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no clear cut strategy on the part of Government for the upliftment of Scheduled Caste (SC) population living below the poverty line;

(b) whether only 281 SC artisans were benefited under the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) schemes during 1st April, 2001 to 1st March, 2004 and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to strengthen the monitoring of the NSFDC's schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) The thrust of the strategy is to eradicate poverty and empower weaker